

Salisbury Historic District Design Guidelines



Chapter 1

Introduction to Non-Residential Guidelines

1.5.B Description of Downtown Historic District

Ever since Salisbury was founded in 1753, its downtown has remained the true civic and commercial center for the city and surrounding county. In spite of the proliferation of shopping centers and malls, the decline of rail travel, and the mobility afforded by automobiles and interstates, downtown Salisbury has enjoyed a continued vibrancy that has become uncommon in contemporary small downtowns.

It could be argued that Salisbury's success is due to its location along a transportation corridor just far enough away from two larger metropolitan areas to remain self-sustaining. Or, it could be said that the small-town mentality of its residents has helped to resist the development pressures so often the death knell of historic downtowns. Whatever the reason, Salisbury has proven to be the model for a successful downtown with a formula founded on an active preservation community, development pioneers, and continued municipal commitment.

Of course, downtown Salisbury has seen its fair share of disappointments. Demolitions, reconstructed façades, and aluminum cladding have changed the face of the historic downtown. However, beginning with the renovation of the Salisbury Depot, to the current surge in development activity in the "east square", Salisbury has demonstrated a long-term commitment to preserving the historic character of its downtown.

Architecture (source – National Register of Historic Places Inventory)

The majority of the downtown historic district is made up of late nineteenth-early twentieth century commercial structures, with a few exceptions. In the 200 block of S. Main, the Conrad-Brem house, built in the Federal Style during first quarter of the 19th century, is quite possibly the oldest existing residential structure in Salisbury. Also in the Federal Style, the Horace-Beard House at 131 N. Main was built c. 1839 and remains as one of the oldest structures in the commercial district.

Significant commercial architecture in downtown Salisbury begins with the oldest commercial structure in the city - Kluttz' Drug Store at the corner of North Main and East Innes Streets. Despite an earlier paint scheme and boarded-up windows, the restored structure originally built c. 1859, still retains its corbeled brick detailing and cast-iron pilasters.

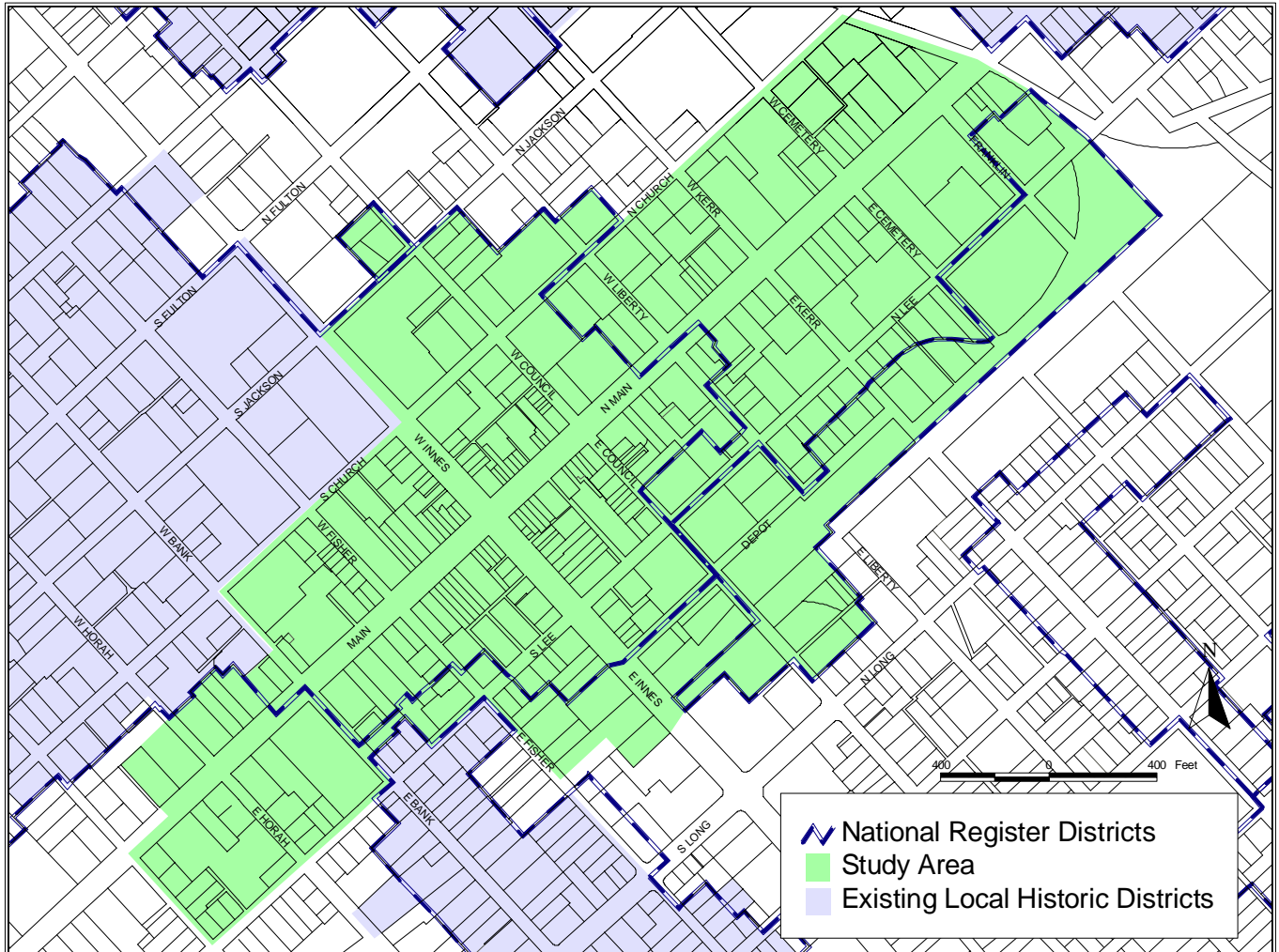
Other buildings of significance would include the Richardsonian Romanesque Bell Building (1898) at 131-133 South Main and the Washington Building (c. 1890) at 118-120 North Main. Both structures are faced with rusticated ashlar and have

exquisite detailing. The Grubb-Wallace building, now known as the Plaza, is the tallest building in downtown at seven-and-one-half stories. The Second Renaissance Revival building was built c. 1900 and is located at the corner of North Main and West Innes Streets.

The importance of the railroad in the development of Salisbury is evident in a number of buildings including the Spanish Mission Style Depot (1907-08) and the Yadkin Hotel (1913). The late nineteenth century warehouse structures abutting the railroad still retain their historic appearance, and sometimes use.

Several religious and civic buildings also exist in the downtown historic district including St. Luke's Episcopal Church (1827-28), the U.S. Post Office and County Courthouse (1909), and the Salisbury Community Building (1855).

1.6.B District Map

*District Boundaries*

The downtown historic district roughly contains all or part of 32 blocks within the downtown core including three National Register Historic Districts – Salisbury Southern Railway, Shaver Rental Houses, and a portion of the Salisbury National Register District.